REMARKS

Claims 1-22 are pending in the application. Claims 1-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Himmel *et al.* (U.S. 6,211,874) in view of Johnson *et al.* (U.S. 4,648,062). Claims 1 and 12 have been amended. No new matter has been introduced.

Before discussing the specifics of the claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), the Applicant believes that a brief discussion of the Applicants' claimed invention and the cited references may be useful.

The invention technical support and training software is referred to in the specification as an "on-line coach". Rather than substituting an interface for an application with which the on-line coach is associated, the on-line coach employs a graphical overlay that is positioned on top of a graphical user interface (GUI) window. The on-line coach guides an end user through a sequence of instructions associated with a task selected by the end user from a list of predefined tasks.

The sequence of instructions are displayed in the graphical overlay, and each instruction directs attention to a respective, selectable, graphical area. The end user operates a selector (e.g., computer mouse) that is coupled to the GUI window and learns a sequence of operations by following the sequence of instructions associated with the selected task by actively interfacing with the GUI window.

Figs. 9-12 provide an example of the invention technical support and training software in which the user interfaces with a GUI window to learn a sequence of operations associated with a smurf detection task 42b. The sequence of instructions 410c, 412c, 414c, and 418c (Figs. 9-12, respectively) are provided in an overlay on the GUI window and directs attention to a respective selectable graphical area 52a, 52b, 52d, 52f, respectively. The end user interacts with the selectable graphical areas 52 as indicated by the sequence of instructions in the overlay.

In contrast, Himmel *et al.* provides a method of accessing files located in a computer system by (i) selecting a plurality of embedded links (such as hypertext links) from one or more pages displayed in a browser window and (ii) processing the plurality of embedded links concurrently. For example, as seen in Fig. 5A and discussed in column 6 beginning at line 54, browser software displays a main browser window 110 on a monitor 30. The browser window

110 includes an image of a currently viewed page, such as a user's home page. The page includes a plurality of hypertext links (i.e., Hypertext link 1, Hypertext link 2, ..., Hypertext link 5).

In the embodiment of Fig. 5D of Himmel *et al.*, a menu 118 is also provided. The menu 118 includes a plurality of tasks (Open, Print, Download, and Options). A selected task is concurrently applied to selected hypertext links (i.e., Hypertext link 2, Hypertext link 4, and Hypertext link 5), indicated in bold.

While Himmel *et al.,* is an efficient way to operate on multiple links on a page, it is not directed to training or providing technical support to an end user by providing a sequence of instructions displayed in a graphical overlay.

Therefore, the Applicant respectfully submits that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Himmel *et al.* should be withdrawn. The distinguishing claim language recited in Claim 1 is ". . . a sequence of instructions being displayed in the graphical overlay, each instruction directing attention to a respective selectable graphical area . . .". Similar claim limitations are included in independent Claim 12.

Johnson *et al.* describes a help panel overlay on an existing screen at the time a help request is entered into a system but does not provide a sequence of instructions as taught by the Applicants. Selection of the panel to be displayed in the Johnson et al. system is based on an analysis by the system as to what commands are valid, or active, for the next step in the process or task that the system is performing. The operator may select (i) directly from a Command Help Panel overlay or (ii) enter the command desired by moving the cursor to the command area of the underlying screen and keying in the command.

Figs. 2 and 3 are example help panels that are overlaid on a command area where commands are being entered. As discussed in Column 5, line 16, "[t]he panel displays two allowable commands with a short explanation of each command function." Selection of the command in this example is by positioning a selection cursor to the line containing the desired command or some equivalent function, depending on the system. In an alternative embodiment, as described in column 5, line 54 through column 6, line 1, the user is allowed to "switch from an interactive command help panel to the command area and input the command while reviewing the help information."

In either case, the contextual help facility of Johnson et al. has a basic fundamental assumption, which is that the operator is only interested in actions that logically follow or are allowable at a given point in the text processing process (see Column 5, lines 8-11). Thus, the contextual help panel of Johnson *et al.* provides options for a given entry and not a "sequence of instructions" as taught by the Applicants' invention technical support and training software and recited in Claims 1 and 12.

Therefore, because neither Himmel *et al.* nor Johnson *et al.* teach or suggest, either alone or in combination, training and technical support software that includes "a sequence of instructions being displayed in the graphical overlay," the Applicant respectfully submits that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is improper and should be withdrawn.

Because Claims 2-11 depend from Claim 1, these claims should be allowable for at least the same reasons. Because Claims 13-22 depend from Claim 12, these claims should also be allowable for at least the same reasons.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is believed that all claims (Claims 1-22) are in condition for allowance, and it is respectfully requested that the application be passed to issue. If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this case, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at (978) 341-0036.

Respectfully submitted,

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MARKED UP VERSION OF AMENDMENTS

Specification Amendments Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.121(b)(1)(iii)

Replace the paragraph at page 29, lines 4 through 24 with the below paragraph marked up by way of bracketing and underlining to show the changes relative to the previous version of the paragraph.

[The present invention is a method and apparatus for supporting] Support and training are provided for a user in operating a software application. A list of task indications are coupled to [the] a GUI window. A graphical overlay is positioned on top of the GUI window and coupled to it. A sequence of instructions associated with a respective task is displayed in the graphical overlay upon selection of [the] a task indication by the user. Each instruction directs attention to a respective selectable graphical area in the GUI window. The user operates a selector coupled to the GUI window, where after selecting a task, the selector is used to select graphical areas in response to the sequence of instructions. [In the preferred embodiment, the present invention further comprises recorded] Recorded voice files or a text-to-speech synthesizer may be coupled to the sequence of instructions, whereby the instruction being displayed is simultaneously presented audibly to the user. [The] A user's selection of one or more selectable graphical areas in a sequence before [selecting] his or her selection of a task [automatically highlights] containing that sequence may result in a list of possible tasks being performed being highlighted automatically. The [present invention is capable of and] support and training are well suited for operating a computer controlling a system such as a data communication network, where the tasks displayed in the list of task indications are user-privilege specific[, and a password is used to restrict the list of task indications to a subset for display. The tasks displayed in the list of task indications are optionally presented to the user as a function of a mode setting, where a mode setting is a beginner, intermediate, or advanced mode setting. One advantage of a GUI coach over the prior art is that the user learns a sequence associated with a task through actively interfacing with the GUI window].

Claim Amendments Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.121(c)(1)(ii)

1.   (Amended) In a computer, an apparatus for <u>providing</u> software training and technical support to an end user, the apparatus comprising:

     a graphical user interface window through which a plurality of tasks are accomplished, said window having a plurality of selectable graphical areas;

     a list of task indications coupled to said window, each task having an associated task indication;

     a graphical overlay coupled to said window, wherein said overlay is positioned on top of said window;

     for each task indication, a sequence of instructions [being] <u>is</u> displayed in the graphical overlay, each instruction directing attention to a respective selectable graphical area; and

     a selector coupled to said window <u>to allow the end user to select tasks and selectable graphical areas</u>, wherein after selecting a task, the <u>end user employs the</u> selector [selects] <u>to select</u> selectable graphical areas in response to the sequence of instructions, wherein [an] <u>the</u> end user [operating said selector] learns a sequence associated with a task through actively interfacing with said window.

12.   (Amended) In a computer, a method for <u>providing</u> software technical support and training <u>to an end user, the method</u> comprising:

     providing a graphical user interface window through which a plurality of tasks are accomplished, said window having a plurality of selectable graphical areas;

     displaying a list of task indications coupled to the window, each task having an associated task indication;

     forming a graphical overlay coupled to said window, wherein said overlay is positioned on top of said window;

     for each task indication, displaying a sequence of instructions in the graphical overlay, each instruction directing attention to a respective selectable graphical area; and

     providing a selector coupled to said window <u>to allow the end user to select tasks and selectable graphical areas</u>, wherein after selecting a task, the <u>end user employs the</u> selector

[selects] to select selectable graphical areas in response to the sequence of instructions, wherein [an] the end user [operating said selector] learns a sequence associated with a task through actively interfacing with said window.